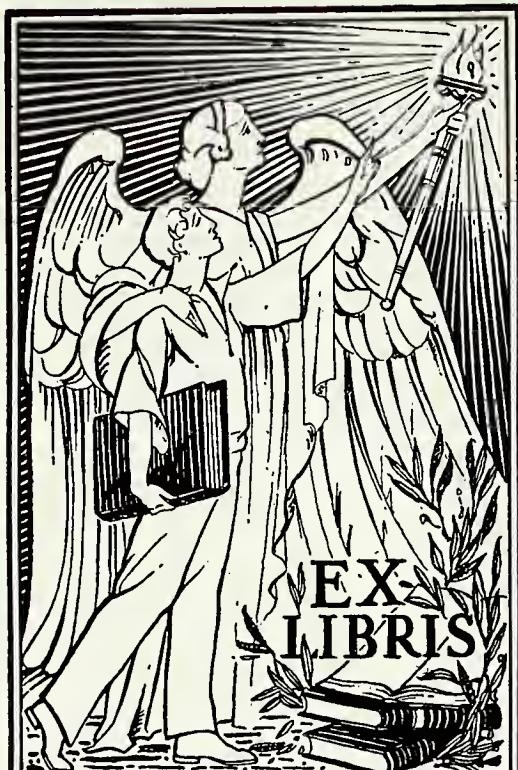


THE CARE OF THE EYES

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THE CARE OF THE EYES.

We have recently received the following interesting communication from The Eye Sight Conservation Council of America, Times Building, New York City. One-third of 2,044 children under school age were tested in Gary, Indiana, and found by Federal investigators to suffer from defective vision. These results, made public here by the Eye Sight Conservation Council of America, are set forth in a report on the Gary experiments made to Secretary of Labor, James J. Davis, a member of the Council's Board of Councillors. Complete physical examinations were made of 994 infants under two years of age and of 3,125 children whose ages ranged from two to seven years. In both groups the distribution of sex was fairly even. The work was carried on in connection with a social and economic study of infant mortality and the pre-school child in Gary by the U.S. Children's Bureau. The study included all children under seven years of age attending the kindergartens and primary grades in all the public schools as well as in three parochial schools. The Gary Children's Year Committee of the Council of National Defence co-operated with the Government representatives under the direction of Dr. Anna E. Rude, Director of the Child Hygiene Division of the Children's Bureau, who reported on the results to Secretary Davis. The Eye Sight Conservation Council, in analysing the facts obtained by Secretary Davis, asserts that "the time to begin to preserve eyesight is at birth," pointing out that rattles and other toys are common sources of infant eye strain. "It was possible to test vision in only about two-thirds of the cases of the children who were given physical examinations, since only the exceptional child under three years of age comprehended the test at all, even though it was made as simple as possible, compatible with accuracy, and only a very small number of children under four years did so. Out of the 2,044 children given vision tests, slightly more than one-third, or 36.1 per cent., showed defective sight of varying degrees, with apparently no significant relation to age, although those in their fifth year showed a slightly higher per cent. than any of the others. In 108 cases, or 5.3 per cent. of the whole number given vision tests, the vision was seriously defective in both eyes, and the need for glasses was imperative, although only 10 per cent. of these children so urgently in need of glasses were wearing them. The other 90 per cent. were not even cognizant of the necessity. There was a high proportion of cross-eyed children, actually 2.4 per cent. of all the children, but here again corrective glasses for this defect were being worn by only about one-seventh of those with this defect. Only one boy, out of the total of 33 boys with cross-eyes, was wearing glasses. Obviously, it was impossible to obtain data regarding vision in the group of 994 infants under two years of age by use of the methods employed; but twenty-three infants, or 2.3 per cent., plainly showed eye defects, and the proportion steadily increased with age. While the report of the Children's Bureau is entirely an

viously, it was impossible to obtain data regarding vision in the group of 994 infants under two years of age by use of the methods employed; but twenty-three infants, or 2.3 per cent., plainly showed eye defects, and the proportion steadily increased with age. While the report of the Children's Bureau is entirely an analysis of statistical data with no attempt to analyse causes and effects of defects, it is quite evident from the high prevalence of defective vision that the eyesight of infants and young children calls for greater attention than has been given in the past." The Eye Sight Conservation Council, after a survey considered the most complete in the history of organized eye conservation, concludes that education is dependent to a large extent upon visual perception, and "in order that school children may have good eyesight it is necessary that proper care be taken of the eyes of the pre-school child in the home," declares a Bulletin of the Council which embodies the official report on this survey and which has just been made public. "The time to begin to preserve eyesight is at birth. The eyes of all new-born babes should be treated with drops to guard against infection. Since the eyes are not fully developed at birth, the baby should sleep in a darkened room for the first three or four weeks of life. Baby's eyes should never be exposed to the direct rays of the sun. A rattle or other toy hung from the top of the baby carriage is a common cause of eye strain. The toys, games, puzzles and picture books used by children should be big and clear. Anything that demands close inspection in order to be seen and enjoyed is not a proper toy for a little child. The inadequate illumination provided in so many of our homes also inflicts severe strain upon the immature eyes of children. Children should not be allowed to play games, read, or study on the poorly-lighted floor or in dark corners of the room or by the window during twilight. Unshaded glaring light is just as harmful as insufficient light. A child who starts out in life handicapped by poor or painful vision has a constant and losing struggle." This investigation carried out on American children it may be hoped will lead to a similar inquiry being conducted on British children.



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